

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /137 W

----- 112777

R 131052Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4948

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 2228

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, MT

SUBJ: GOZO REFERENDUM A DEFEAT FOR MINTOFF

REF: VALLETTA 1969

1. REFERENDUM ON WHETHER THE GOZO CIVIC COUNCIL
WOULD CONTINUE WAS HELD NOV 11, BUT VOTE CAOUNT NOT
COMPLETED UNTIL NOV 13. THE TOTAL WAS ONLY
195 OR 1.27 PERCENTOF A TOTAL ELECTORATE OF 15,621
(OF WHICH 714 WERE BETWEEN 18 AND 21 YEARS OLD). 137
VOTED FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE COUNCIL; 41 AGAINST,
AND 17 VOTES WERE INVALID.

2. THE REFERENDUM WAS PRECEDED BY MUCH CONTROVERSY
WITHIN THE COUNCIL ITSELF. THE MAJORITY PASSED A
RESOLUTION(SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONALIST PARTY)
CALLING ALL GOZITANS TO BOYCOTT THE REFERENDUM.
COUNCIL PRESIDENT, FATHER ZAMMIT, ABSTAINED AND WAS
LATER GIVEN A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE. AT THE LAST
COUNCIL MEETING, HELD NOV 8, THE COUNCIL MAJORITY
WALKED OUT, AND AT FOLLOWING PRESS CONFERENCE
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CONFIRMED THEIR NO CONFIDENCE VOTE ON DECISION TO

BOYCOTT THE REFERENDUM.

3. COMMENT: WHILE NOTHING IN GOZO POLITICS IS CLEAR-CUT, THE ALMOST TOTAL REJECTION OF THE REFERENDUM WAS A DEFEAT FOR MINTOFF, WHO TREATENED TO REMOVE THE COUNCIL REGARDLESS OF VOTE IF LESS THAN SIXTH PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE FAILED TO TURN OUT. IT APPEARS THAT THE GOZITANS NOT ONLY DISLIKETHAT THREAT, BUT ALSO THE THREAT OF ADDITIONAL TAXES CONTAINED IN THE QUESTION. WE READ THE REFERENDUM RESULTS AS ONLY THAT, AND NOT AS A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL INDICATOR. THE RESULT, HOWEVER, IS LIKELY TO CAUSE MINTOFF TO GIVE SECOND THOUGHT TO ANY NATIONAL REFERENDUM THAT HE MAY HAVE IN MIND. GETZ

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Message Attributes

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